

## University of Maryland Support Animal Guidelines and Agreement for Faculty and Staff

### Introduction

The University of Maryland is committed to ensuring an inclusive working environment and providing reasonable accommodations to faculty with disabilities. These guidelines have been set forth to provide for the care of the individual faculty or staff member, the welfare of the Support Animal, and the concern for all members of our community. University Human Resources (UHR) and the Office of Faculty Affairs (OFA) will review requests for the use of a Support Animal by staff and faculty, respectively, with documented disabilities and will make decisions regarding reasonable accommodations on a case-by-case basis. Any staff or faculty member making a request for a Support Animal should review the following guidelines carefully. Please note that these guidelines do not apply to staff or faculty members accompanied by Service Animals, for which formal approval is not required.

These guidelines apply to any staff or faculty member who is requesting an accommodation for a Support Animal. In order to be considered for an accommodation for a Support Animal, staff or faculty members at the University of Maryland must first apply for Accommodation with UHR via the [Accommodation process](#). UHR will review the Accommodation request and make a determination as to whether the request is eligible for reasonable accommodation for both staff and faculty. UHR will then facilitate the interactive process for staff working with their supervisor/s and OFA will facilitate the interactive process working with the faculty member and their department chair/ director to make a final determination regarding the provision of reasonable accommodation.

Support Animals may vary and be from different species which may affect the final determination reached by UHR or OFA. Support Animals are not permitted in campus facilities until official written approval has been given from UHR or OFA. Accommodations would normally be for the course of the academic year and need to be renewed annually, and/or at any point where the accommodation requires modification, such as transition to a new position and/or assignment.

### Definitions

**Support Animal:** As used herein, the term "Support Animal" refers to an animal that provides comfort, reassurance, social interaction and other emotional benefits. A Support Animal does not have to be specially trained to provide support services. A Support Animal is not considered a Service Animal. The use of a Support Animal (i.e., as a comfort or therapy animal) may be allowed as a reasonable accommodation through established procedures. There must be an identifiable relationship between the disability and the need for the Support Animal. Support Animals are not considered pets.

**Staff member:** A staff member includes exempt and nonexempt positions, including contingent employees.

**Faculty member:** A faculty member refers to the individual who holds a current and active faculty appointment (as defined in the University's Appointment, Promotion and Tenure Policy - II.1.00(B)).

### **Animal Control and Behavior**

1. A Support Animal may be permitted at a University facility as a reasonable accommodation to a disability, subject to certain conditions and restrictions , as determined by UHR and OFA.
2. The staff /faculty member is responsible at all times for the care and control of the Support Animal, and for any damage caused by the animal. The Support Animal may not create any sanitation issues or cause unreasonable disruptions. The University reserves the right to require the removal of the Support Animal if these conditions are not met.
3. The University of Maryland and its academic or administrative offices and divisions are not responsible for the care and well-being of the Support Animal. Responsibility for the care, well-being and safety of the Support Animal rests fully with the staff / faculty member.
4. Dangerous, poisonous, unregistered, unlicensed, and/or illegal animals as defined by the Prince George's County Animal Control Division (or as required by the local jurisdiction in which the staff/faculty member's primary place of work is located) are not permitted.
5. This document cannot cover all aspects for the care and control for Support Animals that could include different types of animals (e.g., species, size, weight). Each request for a Support Animal will be individually reviewed to arrive at the best care and sanitation requirement to be provided by the faculty member. The following general guidance is offered.
  - a. The Support Animal must be under the control of the staff /faculty member at all times while on University property. It is the sole responsibility of the staff/faculty member to maintain control of the Support Animal at all times on University property.
  - b. Support Animals not normally leashed (e.g., birds, rabbits, snakes, lizards, gerbils, etc.) that are maintained in enclosures (e.g., cages, tanks, habitats, etc.) must generally remain within their respective enclosure to minimize sanitation

- issues and ensure workplace safety. Support Animals may be off-leash/harness or outside of the enclosures within the confines of the staff / faculty member's office or individual enclosed assigned workspace, but must remain under the control of the staff/faculty member (i.e., leashed, caged, in the habitat, etc.) if a faculty or staff member, student, visitor or other individual requests control of the animal within the staff / faculty member's office or workspace.
- c. Support Animals may not accompany staff / faculty members to meetings, conferences, events, instructional spaces, labs, or other University public venues, except as specifically authorized as part of the staff / faculty member's accommodation plan.
  - d. Unless the Support Animal is leashed or within its enclosure, the door from the staff/ faculty member's office to any shared spaces (e.g., hallway/stairwell corridor, suite, other) must be closed at all times to insure that the animal cannot enter the building's public area and other spaces.
  - e. When transported outside of the staff / faculty member's office or workspace, the Support Animal must be in an animal carrier/enclosure or controlled by a leash or harness.
6. The University in its sole discretion may exclude/remove a Support Animal or take other appropriate action when the Support Animal a) poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, b) causes unreasonable disruption, c) causes an undue hardship to the University or others, and/or 4) otherwise results in a fundamental alteration of a University program.

### **Animal Health and Well-Being**

1. Support Animals must have all required vaccinations to maintain the animal's health and prevent contagious diseases and, for dogs/cats/ferrets, are inoculated against rabies as required by Prince George's County Animal Control Division (or as required by the local jurisdiction in which the staff/faculty member's primary place of work is located). Other recommended vaccinations for the Support Animals health and welfare are highly encouraged. Staff / Faculty members are responsible for the costs of vaccinations. Staff / Faculty members are required to submit documentation of vaccinations before the animal is permitted to enter University facilities and must submit an updated version annually. UHR / OFA reserves the right to request an updated verification at any time during the animal's residency.

Support Animals are required to be licensed and in compliance with Maryland laws. Animal licenses must be obtained, kept current, and must also be submitted before the animal is permitted to enter a University facility. Licensing is processed through Prince George's County's Department of Permits (or as required by the local jurisdiction in which the staff/faculty member's primary place of work is located).

Staff / Faculty members are expected to abide by all county and state laws and requirements concerning humane treatment of the Support Animal.

2. Support Animals, if taken outside the designated office or workspace of the faculty member, must wear identification tags that include a physical address, an up-to-date rabies tag and, if applicable, additional vaccination information.
3. Staff / Faculty members are responsible for feeding and watering the Support Animal within the confines of the faculty member's office or workspace. Water and food dishes, litter boxes, or other such items must be placed on mats to minimize unintended contamination of carpeted surfaces within the office or workspace. These mats are recommended for office spaces with all flooring types, not just carpeted flooring.
4. Support Animal food should be kept in a closed container within the staff/faculty member's office or workspace.
5. Support Animals that are ill may not be taken into public areas, except as may be necessary to enter and exit the staff/faculty member's office or workspace. A staff / faculty member with an ill animal may be asked to remove the animal from campus or a University facility.
6. In the event that the Support Animal becomes lost or stolen, the staff / faculty member should contact UHR or OFA (as applicable) and the Department of Public Safety, University Police immediately.
7. Should the staff / faculty member opt to no longer maintain the Support Animal in a University facility, UHR or OFA should be notified immediately.
8. As part of our life safety program requirements, the University may conduct fire drills without warning in the University facility in which the faculty member and the Support Animal are located. All staff / faculty members present at the time of a fire drill are required to leave the building until the drill is over.
  - a. The staff / faculty member needs to be mindful that fire alarms will ring for an extended period of time - often in excess of five minutes - as part of the drill.
  - b. As no advanced warning may be provided, the staff / faculty member is advised to be aware of how the continuous alarm may affect a Support Animal which is left alone.
9. While it is expected that the staff / faculty member may be away from the assigned office or workspace and his/her Support Animal for hours at a time, the staff /

faculty member must provide for any extended care requirements for the Support Animal based on each animal species' physical and dietary needs. The staff / faculty member may not leave unattended for any extended period a Support Animal beyond its unique physical and dietary needs without ensuring that its care and needs are met. The Support Animal is not permitted to stay in University facilities when they are closed or over break periods.

- a. The Support Animal may not be transferred to another University space or facility space not covered by the original staff / faculty member's accommodation plan with UHR or OFA.

### **Animal Cleanliness and Building Sanitation Requirements**

1. The staff / faculty member agrees to stock and maintain the necessary materials and equipment needed for Support Animal and the proper care of the staff /faculty member's office or workspace.
2. Staff / Faculty members are responsible for properly containing and disposing of the Support Animal's waste, which will necessitate different handling precautions and responsibilities based on the animal.
  - a. Support Animal waste must be disposed of daily in a sealed plastic bag and disposed of in an outside trash dumpster. Animal waste, litter, shavings, et al. may not be flushed down toilets or urinals, nor may they be disposed of in faculty member's office or workspace trash cans.
  - b. All outdoor Support Animal solid waste must be immediately retrieved by the faculty member, placed in a plastic bag, and securely tied before being disposed of in an outside trash dumpster. This material may not be placed in the small site trash containers found along walkways and at seating areas.
3. The University requires that fur-bearing Support Animal not be permitted on University-owned upholstered furniture located in the faculty member's office or workspace. Upholstered furniture with properly-fitted slip covers may be used.
4. Regardless of animal species, indoor urine and/or solid waste within the faculty member's office or workspace or elsewhere in the permitted building and on the way to the exterior must be retrieved immediately and the affected surfaces cleaned by the staff /faculty member with an appropriate disinfectant.
  - a. If the Support Animal vomits or becomes incontinent, it is the responsibility of the staff / faculty member to make sure the contaminated area is cleaned up immediately.
  - b. In unusual circumstances where proper cleaning cannot be achieved by the faculty member, the faculty member should immediately notify Facilities Management (301-405-2222). The staff / faculty member will be responsible

for the costs associated with any subsequent clean-up to include disinfecting of the area and carpet or floor treatment performed by Facilities Management and/or its contractor to minimize damage to the facility.

5. Staff / Faculty members agree to weekly cleaning or as needed of their office or workspace to minimize the accumulation of animal fur/dander from their fur-bearing Support Animals.
6. Staff / Faculty members agree to maintain appropriate grooming requirements for their Support Animals (e.g., bathing, cleaning, brushing) to avoid significant odors, minimize the release of allergens, and manage shedding.
7. Staff / Faculty members are responsible for taking effective precautions to avoid flea and tick infestations. If the Support Animal is found to have fleas or ticks, the staff / faculty member is required to immediately notify Facilities Management (301-405-2222). The staff /faculty member will be responsible for eliminating the fur coat infestation, laundering all animal bedding, and will be responsible for costs associated with treating carpet and upholstery in the employee's office or workspace and any other areas as deemed appropriate. The University reserves the right to require the removal of the Support Animal until any fleas and ticks are removed from the animal.
8. Due to the prevalence of pet allergies in the general population and based on the animal species, the University may expect the faculty member to perform additional thorough cleaning of the staff / faculty member's office or workspace upon relocation or departure from the University.

### **Staff / Faculty Member Responsibilities**

1. The staff / faculty member must provide UHR or OFA, respectively, with a completed Support Animal Request Form and the Veterinarian's Verification that the animal has all current veterinary-required vaccinations to maintain the animal's health and prevent contagious disease.
2. UHR /OFA will notify appropriate University staff and students of the location of the Support Animal and the staff / faculty member and the description of the animal in order to ensure awareness, sensitivity and support in emergency situations and for general informational purposes. In doing so, UHR /OFA will not disclose a disability and/or that an accommodation is being provided, but simply that the animal will be present.

3. The staff / faculty member is responsible for assuring that the Support Animal does not interfere with the routine activities of the University and/or the department/unit or cause difficulties for others who work in the same area. Sensitivity to members of the immediate community of where the Support Animal is located, to staff, faculty, students, and visitors with allergies, and to those who fear animals is an important consideration as to what accommodation plan is reasonable. Such considerations will be taken into account in creating the specific accommodation plan, including the possibility of alternative accommodations for the staff / faculty member requesting the Support Animal.

When another employee (including student employees) is informed of the presence of a Support Animal, and they have a health or safety concern about exposure to the Support Animal, they should be referred to UHR to determine if the other employee is also eligible for accommodation. If not, the staff / faculty member's accommodation plan may be modified. The University will endeavor to use good faith efforts to accommodate all affected or impacted parties.

4. The staff /faculty member assumes all responsibility (e.g., legal, financial) for any damage to University property and/or bodily injury the Support Animal may cause while the Support Animal is on and/or in a campus facility. The staff / faculty member is encouraged to maintain home or renters insurance that may cover injury caused by the Support Animal. Any such damage and/or bodily injury may preclude the Support Animal from returning to the University.
5. The staff / faculty member will inform Facilities Management of the presence of a Support Animal when a service request is in order to alert responding staff. The staff / faculty member must be present when staff enter the room should the service take place when the Support Animal is on campus.
  - a. Should University staff respond to a non-emergency service request and upon office/workspace entry not find the faculty member present but discover the Support Animal, the staff member will immediately leave the space and lock the door. The staff / faculty member will be notified that service was not provided and that a date/time must be arranged when the faculty member can be present.
6. If fleas, ticks or other pests are detected within the office or workspace, the affected area(s) will be treated using approved methods by Facilities Management and/or contracted pest control service secured by the University. The staff / faculty member will be billed for the expense of any required pest management.
7. The staff / faculty member agrees to continue to abide by all other University policies. Having a Support Animal does not excuse the staff / faculty member from following all other University policies, procedures, and guidelines.

8. Should the Support Animal be disqualified or removed from the premises for any reason, the faculty member is expected to fulfill the essential functions of their faculty duties.

### **Accountability and University's Right to Remove the Assistance Animal**

1. As noted above, the staff / faculty member is financially responsible for all damage to property and injuries to others caused by the Support Animal.
  - a. The staff / faculty member is subject to an assessment of costs associated with cleaning, carpet/furniture replacement and/or damages caused by the Support Animal.
    - These costs will be charged through the UMD Cashiering Services, and the employee will be notified with information regarding the charges and how to submit payment.
    - The State has established, under legislative mandate, a Central Collections Unit (CCU) within the Department of Budget and Fiscal Planning. The University is required by State law to refer all delinquent accounts to the State Collections Unit. Please note that Maryland law allows the Central Collections Unit to intercept state income tax refunds for individuals with delinquent accounts, and that CCU is authorized to notify a National Credit Bureau of the delinquency at the time the account is referred to it for collection.
  - b. The University reserves the right to require that the Support Animal be removed from University property in the following situations:
    - If a determination is made that the Support Animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation;
    - If a determination is made that the Support Animal has or would cause substantial physical damage to University property or the property of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation;
    - If there are repeated incidents of the Support Animal not being under control of the staff / faculty member;
    - In the event that the presence of the Support Animal fundamentally alters the University's business or operations, which cannot be resolved through another reasonable accommodation; and/or
    - The staff / faculty member fails to comply with the requirements of this agreement, including the employee's financial obligations associated with the Support Animal and the employee's obligations



to follow local licensing, registration, vaccination and other public health requirements.

**Dispute**

1. Members of the University community who have questions or concerns regarding the behavior of a Support Animal or the presence of a Support Animal in a University facility should not direct their concerns to the staff / faculty member. Rather, direct all questions or concerns to the University's ADA/504 Coordinator.

By my signature below, I verify that I have read, understand and will abide by the Guidelines outlined here.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff or Faculty Member Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
UHR or OFA Designee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Accommodation Start Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date